

From: (b) (6)  
To: [Fowler, Sarah](#); [David Cooper](#)  
Cc: [Rhodes, Charles](#); [Bradley Miller](#)  
Subject: Fwd: Wednesday is last day for public comment on wetlands  
Date: Wednesday, March 25, 2015 11:47:56 AM  
Attachments: [toplogo.gif](#)

---

How are the wetlands that were restored (?) as a result of the enforcement action doing these days?



## Wednesday is last day for public comment on wetlands

### Army Corps of Engineers studying construction impact

By Stephen Elliott  
Staff Reporter

Published: Wednesday, March 25, 2015 6:05 AM CDT

As designs for the new medical center to be built in Mountain Village progress, the Telluride Hospital District must pass hurdle after hurdle, clearing design regulations, public concerns and, currently, federal environmental policy. Wednesday is the last day to submit public comment to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers about the construction of the medical center, which would result in impacts to 0.447 acre of wetlands on the site.

Construction of the new medical center will be contingent upon mitigation of the impact on the wetlands on the site, which is located adjacent to Mountain Village Town Hall and the Gondola Parking Garage.

Questions about the application to THD officials were referred to the Town of Mountain Village's Community Relations Manager Nichole Zangara Riley. Questions to Mike Claffey, the Fruita-based environmental consultant listed on THD's application to the Corps of Engineers, were also referred to Zangara Riley, who provided responses from Claffey in an email.

"The permit includes a detailed wetland mitigation plan that creates 0.74 acre of wetland areas within the Town to replace the 0.44 acre of filled wetland for the new

medical center,” Claffey wrote in the email from Zangara Riley. “The replacement wetlands will provide wetland functions at a higher rate than the impact site wetlands.”

Because construction of a medical center at the site would require filling in the 0.44 acre of wetlands currently in place, THD would have to replace that displaced wetland during the construction process. According to Claffey, that would be through the creation of 0.74 acre of wetland elsewhere in Mountain Village.

“It is hard to imagine the Corps would find that impacts to 0.44 acre of wetlands at the Town Hall site would have a significant adverse impact to the aquatic ecosystem, particularly with the mitigation proposed,” Claffey wrote. “If mitigated, the quality of the wetlands will improve.”

The Corps of Engineers began accepting public comment Feb. 25, and the open period continues through Wednesday. The San Miguel County Board of Commissioners was set to discuss submitting a comment to the Corps of Engineers at their Wednesday meeting. According to Grand Junction-based Corps of Engineers project manager Carrie Sheata, five public comments had been submitted to the Corps as of Monday afternoon.

“The regulatory program is committed to protecting the nation’s aquatic resources, while allowing reasonable development through fair, flexible and balanced permit decisions,” Sheata added.

In projects like the medical center application, the Corps of Engineers is tasked with reviewing compliance with the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. One aspect of such applications is the determination of any practicable alternatives to the site. In the THD’s application, alternate sites in Lawson Hill and Mountain Village are listed under consideration, but several objections are raised to their practicability by the applicant, including their distance from public transportation and their cost. (The preferred site has been offered to THD free of charge by Mountain Village.)

“We believe that the other alternative lots are not practicable for the Medical Center using the Corps and EPA definition of practicable alternatives,” Claffey wrote.

Claffey said the applicants expect a ruling from the Corps of Engineers in four to six months, and Sheata added that the minimum time for a response is 120 days from the submittal of a completed permit application, but can take much longer if there are significant concerns about the project’s environmental impact.

The full THD application and links for public comment on the wetlands mitigation can be found on the Corps of Engineers website at [www.spk.usace.army.mil/Media/RegulatoryPublicNotices/tabid/1035/Article/570805/spk-2014-01067-san-miguel-county-co.aspx](http://www.spk.usace.army.mil/Media/RegulatoryPublicNotices/tabid/1035/Article/570805/spk-2014-01067-san-miguel-county-co.aspx) or by emailing Sheata at [Carrie.A.Sheata@usace.army.mil](mailto:Carrie.A.Sheata@usace.army.mil).

Copyright © 2015 - Telluride Daily Planet